

LOUISIANA *Conservationist*

LOUISIANA WILD LIFE AND FISHERIES COMMISSION

JANUARY
FEBRUARY
1965



Vol. 17 Nos. 1 & 2

Jan.-Feb., 1965

Conservation Pledge

I give my
pledge as an American
to save and faithfully to
defend from waste the
natural resources of
my country—its soil
and minerals, its
forests, waters
and wildlife

*Published Bi-Monthly
in the interest of conser-
vation of Louisiana's nat-
ural resources by the
Wild Life and Fisheries
Commission, 400 Royal
Street, New Orleans, Lou-
isiana. 70130.*



The raccoon, widely distributed over the United States and southern Canada, is about as American as apple pie. In the early days of settlement, fat coons were a standby for hungry colonists. Their pelts played a part in the growth of America's fur industry and a cap made of coon skin complete with dangling tail was a symbol of the pioneering woodmen whose adventurous path took them across the mountains. Today, coon hunting in Louisiana is gaining in popularity as a nocturnal sport providing hours of pleasure in the woods and making the breeding of coonhounds a growing business.

Bob Dennie

LOUISIANA *Conservationist*

LOUISIANA WILD LIFE AND FISHERIES COMMISSION

Subscription Free to Louisiana Residents
Upon Written Request

JOHN J. McKEITHEN
Governor

J. D. HAIR, JR.
Director



R. K. YANCEY
Asst. Director

LOUISIANA CONSERVATIONIST

STEVE HARMON Editor
McFADDEN DUFFY Staff Writer
EDNARD WALDO Staff Writer
ROBERT DENNIE Photographer

LOUISIANA WILD LIFE AND FISHERIES COMMISSION

RAY WHATLEY, Chairman Alexandria
JOHN E. KYLE, JR., Vice Chairman Berwick
A. J. BUQUET Houma
JOHN P. CRAIN Grand Chenier
H. B. FAIRCHILD Sunshine
JIMMIE THOMPSON Alexandria
H. CLAY WRIGHT Evergreen

DIVISION CHIEFS

STEVE HARMON
Chief, Education & Publicity

JOE L. HERRING
Chief, Fish and Game

JULIUS L. BOOK
Chief, Law Enforcement

ALLAN ENSMINGER
Chief, Refuge

TED O'NEIL
Chief, Fur Division

CHARLES R. SHAW
Pittman-Robertson Coordinator

ROBERT LAFLEUR
Chief, Water Pollution Control

HARRY SCHAFER
Dingell-Johnson Coordinator

LYLE S. ST. AMANT
Chief, Oysters, Water Bottoms and Seafood



Permission to reprint material in this publication will be granted provided that it is not used for advertising or commercial purposes and provided that proper credit is given. Contributions and photographs are welcome, but LOUISIANA CONSERVATIONIST cannot be responsible for loss or damage to unsolicited material. Manuscripts should be addressed to Editor, LOUISIANA CONSERVATIONIST, Wild Life & Fisheries Building, 400 Royal St., New Orleans, La. 70130.

Entered as second class matter August 21, 1947, at the Post Office at New Orleans, La., under the act of August 24, 1912.

EDITORIAL

AT THE CLOSE OF this holiday season, it is appropriate in extending all good wishes for the year ahead to glance back briefly over the year that has passed. In appraising the past year, we are able to visualize facets of our activities for the months ahead.

Early in the year that is now past, the Louisiana Wild Life and Fisheries Commission completed what is considered a "first" in game management practices. It is being conducted again and the results should be known in late January or early February. I refer to the telephone survey of dove hunters and dove hunting success which was collected by telephone interviews with approximately 45,000 resident telephone subscribers in all parts of the state. It marked the first time a state wildlife commission had obtained information directly from a mass of hunters all over the state.

The survey proved that interest in dove hunting was mounting and that more than a million doves were harvested by hunters last season. This kill was approximately evenly divided among the three segments of the season. It was ascertained that the three-part season has served to satisfy the demands and wishes of hunters in different sections of the state.

During 1964, the Commission's marine research laboratory facilities at Grand Terre were expanded and completed to meet present demands. The year also marked the third consecutive one of intensive shrimp research which is vital to management of a fisheries resource of great economic importance to so many people in Louisiana—not only those engaged in shrimp trawling but also to countless companion industries which range from ice and freezer operations to packaging and marketing, as well as boat building, marine equipment and trawling gear.

For the second consecutive year Louisiana attracted national attention by live-capture of 150 deer from the Delta National Wildlife Refuge in less than 20 hours of coordinated operation between planes and airboats. This unique system, developed by the Louisiana Wild Life and Fisheries Commission has proved to be the fastest and least expensive method yet devised for the capture of deer for restocking purposes.

With spotter aircraft and fast airboats, the deer were captured quickly and often in less than 10 minutes were tagged and placed on pine straw in heat resistant, closed, but ventilated crates and bedded down until shipment to Venice for trans-

fer by truck to pre-determined release sites.



J. D. HAIR, JR.
Director

In the year ahead a program is planned wherein live deer from Louisiana, trapped in the same fashion, will be exchanged for Florida wild turkeys to help create new wild turkey flocks and expand the state's turkey-hunting areas. This is sound, forward-thinking game management.

One of the important Commission projects for 1964 was purchase of the Saline Wildlife Management Area, consisting of slightly over 60,000 acres of land principally in LaSalle Parish, but extending well into Catahoula Parish to the Larto Lake complex.

This outright purchase of land dedicated to recreational hunting and both commercial and sport fishing can rightfully be considered a major milestone in preparing for the future. The new tract, already under development, will provide sportsmen with deer, squirrel, rabbit, waterfowl and eventually wild turkey hunting. Acquisition of an additional 10,300 acres in September immediately adjacent to the original 50,000 acres purchased in the spring, now will provide ready access to Larto Lake, considered one of the finest lakes in the country for sport fishing. Long-range development will bring this area into prime shape.

Commission efforts toward liberalization of waterfowl restrictions resulted in a longer duck season in 1964 and groundwork has been laid for further liberalization and a teal season. The latter is promised for the summer of 1965. Louisiana rightfully deserves much credit for the less-restrictive regulations which were imposed upon the entire Mississippi Flyway in the past three years. Efforts will be continued to bring about logical seasons for waterfowl that will not harm present waterfowl populations but will serve to increase hunter interest in both nesting and wintering programs.

We can look forward to 1965 with the certainty that much progress has been made and that efforts will be increased in the months that are ahead. *

IN THIS ISSUE

Louisiana Gulf Winter Fishing	2
Fur and Wildlife Festival	7
Coon Hunting . . . Tops in Sport	8
Letters to the Editor	12
Louisiana Leads in Oyster Production	14

King Mackerel Record Broken	18
Georgia—Pacific Wildlife Management Area....	20
Opelousas District Office Completed	22
Planes Versus Pollution	23
Bird of the Month.....	Inside Back Cover



Steve Harmon

Red Snapper catches such as these are commonplace during the winter months. These are bottom feeders as a rule but often they will be found feeding near the surface. As delectable heavyweights, they are one of the most eagerly sought species along the Louisiana coast. A good day's catch will more than fill a large family freezer.

Louisiana

Hundreds of Offshore Rigs

PAUL KALMAN

MOST AMERICAN FISHERMEN look upon Winter with jaundiced eyes.

With rare exceptions, it is the season for repairing tackle, patching or painting boats, and performing the myriad odd chores which never seem to be accomplished any other time of year.

Perhaps because so many of them are unfamiliar with the opposite side of the coin, our Louisiana coastal anglers often do not appreciate the good fortune of living in an environment where Winter has practically no effect on the overall fishing scene.

To the contrary, Winter in coastal Louisiana merely sees a few changes in the species of fish to be caught, but no difference at all in their quality or quantity.

For example, who can say anything derogatory about the pompano?

In Louisiana, this most expensive and delectable of all salt water game fish bites better in the dead of Winter than any other time of year.

The same holds true for the beautiful red snapper. While snappers can be taken around the calendar, they are at their seasonal best during December, January and February. Not only are the individual specimens much larger, but they are considerably more numerous.

Spanish mackerel and bluefish constitute the remaining members of Winter's Big Four popularity team in Louisiana's offshore waters.

Newcomers to the angling scene will be interested to learn that Winter fishing as we know it today did not exist prior to 1947. In November of that year, the first towering oil production platform or "rig" came into being about five miles south of historic Grand Isle. This original platform had not even begun to produce oil before several charter boats and privately owned fishing vessels began running out to watch the drilling crews at work.

As a matter of experiment, a few venturesome souls dropped lines overboard and had their ef-

Gulf Winter Fishing

Photos by Author

Provide Anglers With Excellent Catches

forts rewarded with immediate pompano strikes.

As one Veteran Grand Isle charter skipper recalls: "I had seen so few pompano in my life that I couldn't properly identify the first one we caught under that earliest Humble rig. I thought it was a small jack crevalle, and I continued to think this way until we got back to shore. A truck driver from the French Market, who was on the island picking up a load of shrimp, had hauled pompano to New Orleans from Florida and recognized it right away for what it really was."

Scattered specimens of pompano may be caught along the Louisiana coast during the summer months, but the "season" doesn't really begin until the onset of colder weather. Generally speaking, November 1 is about the earliest date you can go pompano fishing with reasonably good chances of success. An exception occurred last September when un-seasonally cold weather swept into the Pelican State on the heels of Hurricane Hilda. Thermometers dropped into the low 40's, and water temperatures took a corresponding nose dive. Less than a week following the passage of the hurricane, large schools of

pompano appeared at the rigs offshore from Venice, Empire and Grand Isle.

Good to excellent pompano fishing may be expected through March, when it begins tapering off.

Pompano fishing requires considerably more skill than one might imagine. It looks no harder than casting out a small nylon jig and reeling it back in. This, at least, is how it appears to the beginner.

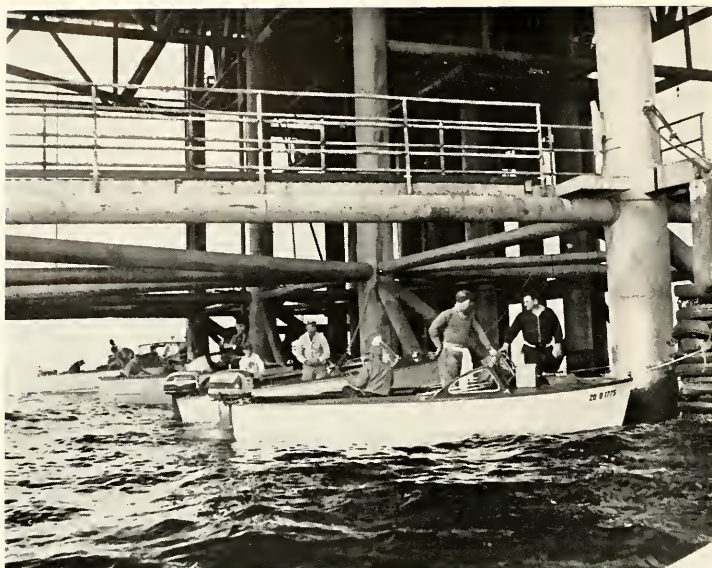
In reality, the experienced pompano angler carefully chooses a small weighted jig with a short nylon tail, in either white or yellow. He then cuts a tiny morsel of fresh shrimp and impales it on the hook with the shrimp protruding between the filaments of nylon.

He has taken preliminary care to tie his boat as close as possible to the oil rig, so as to be in easy casting range of the rig's underside where pompano love to congregate. He then casts the jig in the direction from which the tide is flowing and allows it to sink. Casting down-tide is merely wasting time.

The angler retrieves only fast enough to re-

Prince of the Winter visitors is the platinum-blue pompano. Erection of hundreds and hundreds of oil and gas drilling platforms in the Gulf of Mexico changed the migratory pattern of the highly-prized pompano. More and more of these fine game and food fish visit the Louisiana coast yearly, migrating in ever-increasing numbers from Florida waters.





Rig fishing is not just for the charterboat parties. Many of the early platforms are only a few miles from shore and fast outboarders enjoy the same fishing that is had on the larger boats. This photograph shows a small flotilla of outboards tied to an offshore platform, the anglers aboard ready to sample what the rig offers.

cover slack so he may feel the tender nudges of the pompano when it bites. This pressure may be so slight as to be almost unnoticeable. It is here, once again, that experience is a major factor toward success.

Regulation fresh water tackle of the type and weight associated with bass fishing is ideal for pompano. You can take pompano on heftier gear but in so doing, you eliminate most of the fun. With a light rod and line, pompano are among the hardest fighters of any fish that swims.

Since pompano are without teeth, there is no need to use wire leaders. Leaders actually seem to lessen your chances of taking pompano when the water is very clear.

Spanish mackerel or bluefish may happen along and take a pompano lure by accident, slashing through the slender monofilament line with their razor sharp teeth. The angler should prepare for these unforeseen eventualities with an emergency stock of extra lures. If water conditions permit, the very lightest of nylon covered twisted bronze leaders may be used. When leaders become absolutely essential (as they sometimes do when mackerel and bluefish are extra abundant), remember to use the very smallest of swivels between the leader and your line. Mackerel and bluefish find swivels even more attractive than lures and will strike them accordingly.

It is obvious from the foregoing that Spanish mackerel and bluefish are considerably less sophisticated than pompano, and may be caught with greater ease. When they are hungry (which is almost always), mackerel and bluefish will strike practically any type of small, flashing object that moves through the water. Increasing the speed and erratic action of the lure produces even more slashing strikes. It is not at all unusual to catch mackerel and bluefish two at

a time by using pairs of weighted jigs on the same line.

One word of caution for the fledgling. The same tooth that will part your line in the twinkling of an eye can cut un-wary fingers to the



A Spanish mackerel is a fine battler, particularly on light tackle. They prowl the gulf waters in schools that sometimes cover several acres. Like the schooling blue fish which offer fine winter sport, Spanish mackerel will hit just about any lure that is tossed their way.

bone. Whenever you are handling a mackerel or bluefish, and particularly when you're removing the hook, do so with the greatest caution. If the fish swallows your lure, dispatch it first with a billy club before proceeding with the business of extracting the hook with forceps and remember that "dead" fish often come to life.

Red snappers are usually caught beneath the same rigs where you encounter pompano, bluefish and mackerel. The change necessary is to replace the nylon jig with an ordinary No. 8/0 hook, and to attach a lead sinker of sufficient weight to hold your line on the bottom. The precise sinker size depends on the speed of the current.

Snappers are primarily bottom feeders and it is here that you begin searching for them. If there isn't a bite in five minutes, you can figure there are no snappers at this particular rig, or that they're feeding closer to the surface. Reel the line in a few feet, allowing your bait to rest 30 to 45 seconds before taking in several more feet. Somewhere along the way, you should get a bite unless the rig is being snubbed by the snappers.

Don't be discouraged if you fail to connect at the first rig. This also applies to pompano, bluefish, and mackerel. It is common practice to move from one rig to another until fish are eventually located. Why this is so is often hard to fathom. There is little difference between one rig and another, but the fish apparently think otherwise.

No legal limits are imposed on the catch of pompano, bluefish, mackerel or red snappers so the angler's take is limited only by his skill or the size of his icebox.

This brings up the question: "Is it possible to overfish the rigs to the extent that they will be fished out?"

Veteran charter skippers swear that the offshore rigs are like a bottomless cornucopia in that they continually attract new fish to replace those removed by the angler.



Here a winter fisherman battles one of nearly a dozen species of "winter" fish.



Often in winter fishing along the Louisiana coast, anglers take what they refer to as a mixed catch.

"We have caught pompano and snappers steadily at the same rig for several days in a row without experiencing any decline in the overall size of the catch," declares one of the most successful skippers who sails from the port of Venice near the mouth of the Mississippi. "If our catch starts to fall off, we simply move on to another rig, giving the original rig a chance to 'rest'. When we return in a few days, we usually find our catches at this first rig to be right back up to par."

Last Winter, this particular captain made such huge catches of pompano that he was able to buy a fine new cabin cruiser with the proceeds realized from the sale of his fish.

The famous French restaurants in New Orleans readily purchase pompano for at least \$1 per pound.

These pompano bonanzas often tempt some charter boatman to fish for the market at the same time they are carrying parties of sportsmen to the offshore rigs. We will not enter into a discussion concerning the propriety of this practice other than to say that it is the source of considerable controversy. To avoid argument, it is always best to check in advance with the skipper of the boat you hire to determine if you keep the entire catch, whether he fishes for himself and you fish for yourself, or just how he proposes to handle it.

If you should be lucky enough to bring in more pompano than you can use and are tempted to sell them, remember there's the important little detail of a commercial fishing license. Unless you have one in your possession, you violate Louisiana state law if you accept even a nickel for your catch.

The same holds true for snappers, or for that matter, any other salt water food fish. Snappers are second only to pompano in their appeal to customers of the fish markets and snapper catches are frequently so enormous that there is immediate temptation to dispose of the surplus by offering it for sale.

This writer knows of an authenticated case where three anglers fished an oil rig off the mouth of the Mississippi last Fall and almost sank their 22-foot boat with the catch. One of the sportsmen had a commercial license, so he sold the entire 2000 pounds to a fish dealer in Venice for the sum of \$240.

Snappers are the biggest of the popular Big Four caught off-shore in Louisiana during the Winter. While the average snapper weighs from 1½ to 5 pounds, you will see many 10 to 12 pounders, and some up to 20 pounds.

With most species, the smaller fish are better eating than the big fellows, but this is not true of snappers. There is little apparent difference in flavor or texture between a two or 20 pounder.

Pompano will average around 2½ pounds, with 5 pounds about tops. A few six pounders have been caught but they were museum pieces, at least for Louisiana waters.

Louisiana bluefish are roughly half the size of those caught along the Atlantic seaboard, with an average of two pounds being about normal. A five pound blue is exceptional.

Spanish mackerel caught in Winter along the Louisiana coast are roughly twice the size of those taken during the Summer. Three, four or five pound mackerel are the rule rather than the exception.

Winter fishing entails a few extra preparations which are not necessary in warm weather. For one, you need much heavier clothes topped off by some kind of effective wind-breaker, preferably a water-proof parka. Running out to the offshore rigs in a high speed boat is always an exhilarating experience, but this can also be quite chilling unless you're properly garbed.

If you happen to be using your own boat in preference to a charter vessel, be certain to check every piece of safety and navigational equipment. You will need an up-to-date map or chart plus a dependable compass. New oil drilling structures are always being added in offshore waters to the same extent that other ones are removed and a recently published chart is almost a "must" if you are not thoroughly familiar with the area.

Your fuel tanks should always be "topped off" before leaving the landing, and it won't hurt if you have a few extra gallons aboard to tide you over in case a sudden fog causes you to lose your bearings. Most of the time, you'll see plenty of boat traffic around the offshore rigs, but the occasion can always arise when you'll be fishing a rig where few boats ever visit. If you should get lost in such a remote place, it's mightily comforting to know that you have enough gas to poke around along the shoreline until you find your way back home.

Before embarking on any offshore fishing trip



Charterboat anglers generally have a field day during the winter months.

(Summer or Winter), you should make a habit of checking with the Weather Bureau. If the forecaster says a high pressure system is headed our way, you'll be wise to cancel out for at least a day after the front arrives. One or two days after a cold front, the seas are almost always calm and the fish are usually quite hungry.

If a poll were to be conducted to determine the most popular Winter fish with offshore anglers, the pompano would undoubtedly win hands down, with snappers running a poor second. You simply do not fish for snappers or, for that matter, any other species, if the pompano are running.

On the other hand, one of the most attractive features of Winter rig fishing is that you can almost always fall back on the snappers, mackerel or bluefish if pompano can't be located. Croakers, sheepshead, silver trout (weakfish), and an occasional channel bass (redfish) might also be encountered.

Trout are almost ridiculously simple to catch, as are croakers. They bite practically any kind of bait, including cut-up chunks or strips of meat from their own species. This cannibalistic tendency is quite common with most of the fish found beneath the oil structures.

Any fisherman who has undergone the frustration of having a sheepshead steal his entire bucket of bait is in for an enlightening experience if he tries catching sheepshead at the rigs during cold weather. The striped bandits become real fall guys for a live river shrimp, and will strike with unbridled gusto. Under these conditions, many anglers who have never been able to catch sheepshead before can hook them every time.

With such prospects in store, it's no secret why the fishermen of coastal Louisiana anticipate the coming of Winter the same way kids await Santa Claus.

Miss Gail Broussard of New Iberia, Louisiana fur queen in 1963, is shown above being crowned by her 1962 counterpart, Miss Susan Bienvenu of Houma. Looking on is Cameron Parish queen Miss Judy Hebert.

The Cameron Parish Home Demonstration Council took first place honors in the parade with this float depicting Cameron Parish as the "Hunter's Dream". Miss Judy Hebert is the lovely queen atop the float.

Fletcher Miller of Cameron, champion Nutria skinner, with his daughter Donna who is decked out in a Nutria wrap. In addition to his trapping work, Mr. Miller finds time to help out during the Menhaden run.



FUR AND WILDLIFE FESTIVAL

The annual Fur and Wildlife festival will be held in Cameron on January 15 and 16 according to Hadley A. Fontenot, president and general manager.

Festival activities will begin Friday night, January 15 with a program in the Cameron elementary school auditorium highlighted by the crowning of the Cameron Parish queen. On Saturday, beginning at nine o'clock in the morning activities will include 4-H fur judging and trap

setting contests followed by retriever trials, nutria and muskrat skinning contests, oyster shucking and duck and goose calling contests.

Climaxing the events of the festival will be Queen's ball which will be held in the recreation center Saturday night.

The Louisiana Wild Life and Fisheries Commission is erecting a comprehensive fur and wildlife exhibit in the Cameron library building. The public is cordially invited to visit this exhibit.



Finishing out a Nutria pelt in record time is Billy Martin of Grand Chenier. Nutria skinning and pelt finishing are two of the contests held annually in conjunction with the Fur and Wildlife Festival.



Mary Henry of Cameron tries out her aim in the trap shooting contest while Bob Schwark, one of the judges, looks on.



A replica of the menhaden vessel attracted a great deal of attention during the parade.



COON HUNTING... TOPS IN SPORT

McFADDEN DUFFY

Photos by the Author

THIS IS THE TIME of the year when the voice of the coonhound rings throughout the land. Coon hunting isn't restricted to any particular season, but there are probably more coon hunters afield at night as the hunting seasons begin to close and sportsmen still are searching for keen recreation.

This might be considered a broad statement by some who have never been initiated to the sweet nocturnal music of trailing hounds, shining eyes and the cunning of a tree-top bandit that nature has endowed with physical characteristics which make its face similar to that of a sly, masked bandit.

Coon hunting is a growing sport in Louisiana. Basic requisites are companionable friends, one but preferably more coonhounds, headlamps, flashlights and batteries to spare.

The night-prowling raccoon is considered one of the fat men of the animal kingdom. That's because of an enormous appetite that makes him an old hand at the sly art of pilfering. Capable of battling as savagely as a fighting dog, a coon also has one of the high I. Q.'s among animals. Little things like mastering locking devices also add to the appropriate title of "bandit of the tree tops."

A group of scientists put the raccoon's intelligence to test about a decade ago and came up with the positive finding that it was led only by monkeys. In their report, the coon was said to be "temperamental, nervous and bilious."

There is good reason for the coon to be temperamental and nervous. He has been forced to spend a great deal of his time dodging hunters, trappers and clamorous dogs. The tails of his forebears once dangled from fur caps as the familiar frontier pennants of our pioneering days.

The fur is still used today for winter sportswear and collars on garments but the demand for coon pelts in the markets has its ups and downs in keeping with seasonal changes decreed by fashion.

It readily follows that with thousands of steel-jawed traps, hunters armed with searchlights and guns, and packs of both blooded and non-descript hounds seeking him, the raccoon has good reason for nervousness.

The coon's weak spot is his appetite. The pas-



sion for food does him in oftener than hunters or hounds. There are few animals indulging in more food and less exercise. Raccoons will sample nearly anything that is edible. The starchy calories of corn in its milk stage are just a teaser and the rest of his diet certainly indicates that he is not on a low-calory fare.

The general diet includes flesh, eggs, the produce of orchards, grain fields, nut groves, beehives, vegetable gardens and berry patches. But the bulk of his diet comes from ponds, streams and swamps. Frogs, trying to escape, often seek safety in the mud but to no avail. A coon's tactile fingers will unerringly seek them out.

Then, too, the raccoon's cunning will occasionally bring it to a poultry yard after dark. Unlike other chicken-coop raiders the coon uses finesse. When henhouse doors are guarded only by simple latches, he manipulates them with skillful paws until he has gained entry. Often he will slaughter more than he can possibly consume.

A coon is slow and ponderous. Those excesses in feeding neither improve his figure nor qualify him for long foot races. But never underestimate its dexterity with its paws. With those, a coon

can open doors, climb metal posts and even unscrew the cap on a jar.

The fatty poundage put on a coon by universal appreciation of all things that are good to eat, however, hasn't taken the steam out of the wall-ops he delivers in rough-and-tumble scraps. Courageous in battle, he never loses face. His tough hide and rolls of cushioning fat come to his aid. A coon can shake off a dog of twice his weight whose jaws close on his skin.

A coon's sharp teeth and claws can make mincemeat out of a hound. Sometimes a wily coon, treed, will take the initiative and plunge right into the baying pack at the base of a tree.

Unlike the rest of his plump body, a coon's head resembles the fox's. It is finely chisled, sensitive, bold and alert.

There's a lot more about a coon that could be written, stressing his good points as well as those characteristics of banditry, but it takes a special kind of hound to be a coonhound. Of course, there are hounds and hounds. Most of them can be trained to run any kind of game. Trailing is the basic instinct in the make-up of a hound. But a good coonhound must be a natural tree dog, and this is a different matter.

There are many coonhounds that will run a coon trail true and hard, with enough mouthing to satisfy those folks who merely like to hear the bugling of the hound in chase. However, with some hounds, when the coon is treed and takes to a high one, or holes up and the race is over, many so-called coonhounds will wander off in search for another trail. Such hounds cannot be considered good coon dogs because they will not bark "treed" and thus inform the hunters of the location of the clever tree top quarry.

A good coonhound must stay at the tree, barking until his owner can locate the sound and reach the tree. There are some coon dogs that will work

a trail wonderfully well, pushing the coon closely until it trees or finds sanctuary in a hollow log. Unless the hunter or hunters appear promptly, those kind of hounds become discouraged and resume hunting another trail for another chase.

The good coonhound is a sticker. He will stay at the spot barking for hours if necessary. A man who owns hounds like that is amply rewarded before the hunt is over.

In Louisiana, the regulations governing coon hunting are clear and easy to understand. "It shall be legal for parties of two or more hunters, and with one or more dogs to hunt raccoons at night with lights and to carry on such hunts for the purpose of taking raccoons with not more than one standard .22 caliber rimfire rifle, and to use single ball rim fire ammunition only."

Confusion exists in the minds of some hunters because of strict enforcement of other state game laws prohibiting night hunting with shotguns or rifles more powerful than the .22 caliber rim fire. There's also some misunderstanding about the legal phrase "single ball rim fire ammunition." In reality, this means standard rim fire .22 short, long or long rifle ammunition.

This writer has been hunting coons whenever the opportunity presented itself for the past 10 or 12 years. While most coon hunts end the same way, with two or possible three fat coons to show for a night in the woods, each one is somewhat different. Maybe it is the performance of the hounds. Sometimes it is the weather. At any rate, each hunt stands out sharply in memory and there is always the desire to go on another one. That's the way coon hunting gets into a man's blood.

Last November we made a coon hunt with Cotton Fairchild, his son W. B. Fairchild, and some friends. As always, there was a lot of talk about hounds and coons as we drove to the place where

Members of the party prepare to start out after it is dark. Coonhounds are special dogs. Here is a red-bone, a black and tan, and a registered July 1-black and tan—as fine a combination of trailing and treeing hounds as any dedicated coon hunter can hope to own.





Carried by vehicle deep into the woods, the hounds are released from the portable kennel and after sniffing the ground and whimpering in anticipation, they pad away into the woods casting for the scent of a hot trail. From the release site, members of the hunting party take to the woods and give whoops of encouragement to the blooded hounds.

we planned to hunt. There were three vehicles in the hunting convoy. All were four-wheel drive because rare indeed is the group that can get into prime coon country without taking to rough terrain.

Cotton's three coon hounds were whimpering softly in the carrying box on the rear of the vehicle. There was Buggar, a redbone; Inky, a nicely marked black and tan; and Lou, a registered July-black and tan. They were ready to go. The coolness of the early night was heavy with the leafy odor of trees, vines, bushes and moist ground.

We lurched and swayed along what could not possibly be called more than a path in the woods. At times we came to boggy places, turned gumbo soft by an inch of rain the night before. In four-wheel drive we churned through them and there was the sound of mud being sprayed against the fenders.

Cotton holds that it isn't necessary to wait until late at night to start a coon hunt.

"Soon as it gets dark," he said. "Those coons start moving. That rain last night was just right. They'll leave a good trail."

The headlights cut swaths of light through the woods as we moved along. One of the companionable things about coon hunting is that there is no need for silence, except when the hounds

are trailing and the hunters are trying to keep track of them by ear.

When he stopped the four-wheeler, we climbed out and Cotton snapped on the headlight he was wearing. Flickering pencils of light leaped from about a dozen flashlights and headlamps as we gathered at the carrying cage and Fairchild released the hounds. The coonhounds hesitated for a moment and sniffed the ground experimentally, then silently padded off into the darkness. Cotton pulled a hunter's horn from his pocket and slipped the thong around his neck. We started walking in the general direction the hounds had taken.

The dogs were ranging and the heavily wooded section was dark and quiet except for the sound of our boots in the matted wet leaves and branches. I followed Cotton and watched him searching the tree tops and alternately glancing at the ground. Branches and vines tugged at my camera and spider webs clung to my face.

Suddenly, deep in the woods ahead of us, there came the throaty and elated sound of a hound opening up. One of the other dogs joined in and then the third. We stopped to listen.

"That was Buggar that found a hot trail," Cotton said softly. "He is all business about coons. Let's go!"

We quickened our pace and headed for the area where the hounds were trailing. Cotton gave them an occasional whoop of encouragement. The coon scent was hot in the hounds' nostrils. They bugled and crashed forward. We followed as quickly as possible. The chase took us probably



When a coon is treed, the hounds remain at the base of the tree and begin frantic baying that signifies they have finally treed the masked bandit of the woods. This leads the hunters to the spot. While the members of the hunting party surround the tree and search the uppermost branches for sight of the coon, the hounds continue their frantic leaping and clawing at the tree.

a quarter of a mile and the sound of the hound music grew louder and more intense. The hounds were pressing the coon and soon it would tree.

"That coon's gotta go," said Cotton in a matter of fact fashion. He knew that hound music like a conductor knows the notes of a concert orchestra. "He's gotta go."

We hurried forward, ducking under low limbs and sidestepping thorn bushes and briars. At last we pulled up puffing and panting at the base of a tall gum tree. The dogs were leaping at the tree, hurling throaty taunts at the coon somewhere overhead.

"Circle the tree and move back," Cotton's voice boomed out above the clamor of the leaping, howling hounds.

We surrounded the tree. Each fork and branch was carefully searched by the beams of light from flashlights and headlamps. The coon was somewhere up there but with cunning that is hard to describe, it had buried its face in a high fork of the tree. The minutes dragged by and the coon probably decided that all of the commotion at the base of the tree couldn't bother him. It was a question of waiting until the hunters and hounds left. Then, he would be able to follow his instinct to feast. In confidence, the coon looked down. It violated the code by which skyscraper window cleaners live by: "Never look down."

"I see it," shouted one member of the party. "There by the big fork toward the left."

More than a half-dozen beams of light converged on the furred quarry crouched in the fork and looking down. The raccoon's eyes were like blood-red rubies, jeweled and glowing like twin coals. We held it in our lights and tried to recover our breaths. I guess half of the panting was from the excitement of the chase. This was when the camera went into action. The leaping dogs, and then a quick lens change to get a shot of the coon. It seemed to blink each time the flashbulb popped and inched out on the branch until it was in clear sight.

"Come over here with that .22 rifle," Cotton yelled above the fierce baying of the hounds.

The man with the .22 rifle moved over to our side of the tree and sighting over the barrel of his .22 with a headlight, he touched off a well placed shot. The coon seemed to shudder. It remained still for a moment and then came crashing down to the ground. The dogs leaped at it but Cotton Fairchild chased them off. He proudly held up a fine bull coon that would easily go 15 pounds. Cotton pushed it into a sack that one of the hunters carried and the hounds moved off to seek another hot trail. As the dogs padded off silently but satisfied, Fairchild gave them a whoop of encouragement. We spread out and followed.

It wasn't a half hour before they struck another hot trail and the nocturnal chase was on. Then followed that half-stumbling race behind the dogs. This coon pulled every trick in the book. It swam across a shallow lake, doubled back and finally,

we heard the hounds sound the treed message. They'd followed it.

For the uninitiated, a coon doesn't like to swim but it will to elude chasing hounds. This brings up the business of washing everything before the coon eats it. Research has proved that it isn't so. The coon will hold to its scientific name *Procyon Lotor* which means "one who washes" but a coon doesn't enter water to bathe or because it enjoys the sport of swimming. It swims only to escape enemies. It wades only to fill its belly. The habit of rinsing most of the food before it eats has won the coon a reputation for cleanliness. To be sure, it will wash frogs and crawfish, but not because it is fastidious. Those snacks are scooped out of muddy shallows and the coon washes away the mud and grit.

The main reason for the coon's apparent cleanliness is the lack of saliva, which makes swallowing dry foods far from comfortable. Take a hound with plenty of saliva. It can gulp down a dry dog biscuit without much trouble. But captive coons, who also enjoy dog biscuits, must soften them with water before swallowing. This applies to foods of similar nature, but raccoons will literally gobble foods of high moisture content without first washing them.

That's coon hunting in Louisiana, a fast-growing sport in which more persons young and old are actually taking renewed interest. *



Cotton Fairchild admires a big bull coon that led the hounds a good chase before it was finally treed and then bagged. Highly prized by many people for food, the raccoon is a source of hours of keen pleasure for a growing number of Louisiana sportsmen.

Letters...

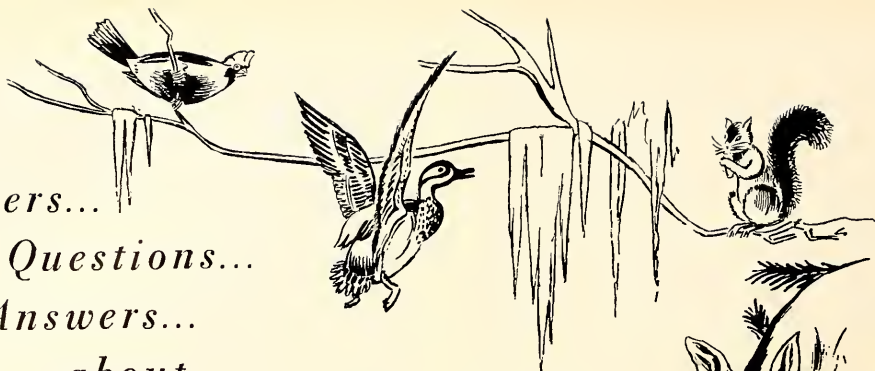
Questions...

Answers...

about

WILDLIFE in LOUISIANA

conducted by Steve Harmon



Dear Editor: Shreveport

Could you settle a point for us that has had us going for quite a spell now here in the office where we work. Our argument is this, half of us say that when you are squirrel hunting in the woods and you see small limbs cut off very round and neat that these are cut by squirrels. The other half claims they are cut off by beetles, and worms. Sometimes a small bush will have a round cut on it and the top of it will be missing where its been cut off.

Could you please tell us what cuts these limbs off.

MAURICE MILAM

The neatly cut off twigs which you find in the woods have been cut by an insect called the twig girdler, which carries the scientific name of Oneideres cingulatus. After the girdled twig has fallen to the ground the larvae make their way to a suitable fallen log for further development.

Dear Editor:

Could you please send me the "pocket type book" which tells the seasons of all the different types of games and the laws pertaining to the methods of taking them. I had such a book but lost it, and I find it very helpful.

I also wish you would send me a list of the parishes that forbid the use of a "22" rifle.

I love to hunt squirrels with a rifle and I'm told that even though the State Law says it is okay to do so, some parishes forbid it.

If a hunter knows he can't use a rifle in a parish then he can avoid trouble and avoid breaking the law.

DANIEL E. BAUMAN

A copy of "Louisiana Hunting, Fishing and Trapping Regulations" is in the mail. See local officials, such as sheriff and clerk of court for local ordinances.



Dear Editor: Simsboro

We are sending you a picture of a 6 lb. 5 oz. bass caught out of a farm pond near Simsboro.

The bass was caught by William Colvin (left). He was fishing with Mickey Harrison (right). William caught the bass on a spinning rig and a plastic red worm. Both of us are readers of your magazine and would appreciate it if you would print this.

WILLIAM COLVIN—
MICKEY HARRISON

Well, here goes another good fish story . . . with the evidence.



Dear Editor: Leesville

Enclosed is a snapshot of a 5 foot rattlesnake with 13 rattlers and a button, which my 10 year

old son, Marvin, is holding with me.

It was killed by myself, Luther Cryer, in September 1964 on the Cryer Crossing on Anacoco Creek.

Please print this snapshot in the LOUISIANA CONSERVATIONIST.

LUTHER CRYER



Game is where you find it and Jacob Duca, above, at New Orleans found these six rabbits in the Lake Bargne area.

Dear Editor: Indianapolis, Ind.

I recently had placed in my hands the November-December 1964 issue of your state publication. I wish to compliment you on the very fine magazine.

Apparently, we are not on your mailing list as I have not seen a copy of your publication before. I am particularly interested in the article by McFadden Duffy, entitled, "Threatened".

We are facing some very similar problems in this state. It would be very helpful to me if you would

forward two or three copies of this November-December issue, or if Mr. Duffy has reprints of the article a few copies would serve the same purpose.

Thank you for your assistance in this matter.

WOODROW FLEMING, Director
Fish and Game Division

It appears that such problems are popping up all over. Three copies are on the way.



Dear Editor: Metairie

Here is a portion of the 250 speckled trout that were caught June of 1964 out of Hopedale. The smallest one weighed approximately a pound and a half. They nearly all ran 2½ to 3 pounds as an average; but a good per cent weighed 4 pounds. The whole catch was made by myself and my son, and a friend who was not able to be in the picture because he took it.

G. T. BATT

Dear Editor: Port Barre

On Sunday, October 11, 1964, while hunting in the Pointe Coupee-St. Martin Parish area of the Atchafalaya Basin, my nephew Kermit Morris got lost.

With the assistance of the Pointe Coupee Parish Sheriff's office, the Louisiana Wild Life and Fisheries Game Agents from that parish and the St. Landry Parish Sheriff's office Kermit was found about midnight Sunday.

I would like to take this means of expressing the sincere appreciation and gratitude of the family and friends of Kermit Morris for the cooperation and assistance of these men who gave so willingly their time in the search for this young man. It is comforting to know that we have men such as these in our public service.

Edward Morris, Family and
Friends of Kermit Morris.

Wildlife agents, like sheriffs and their deputies, are on duty call 24 hours per day, seven days per week, and are always ready to assist in periods of emergency.



Dear Editor: Marksville

Here is a picture of several squirrel tails evidence of several nice hunts made in October in the Spring Bayou area at Marksville. Spring Bayou and Little River is generally known for its fishing but as you can see, there is good squirrel hunting providing you have a good dog.

GEORGE D. DESSELLE

Dear Editor: LaPlace

Every rabbit season, the same question seems to come up among the hunters in this area. That is, "What is the cause of the worm found under a rabbits neck? What affect it has on the rabbit? Is the rabbit good to eat when it has that worm?"

I would appreciate it if you would send me this information

and—print it in the CONSERVATIONIST.

ALBERT P. TASSIN

The Rabbit Bot or "Warble" is not uncommon at this season of the year. It is the larval or maggot stage of the rabbit botfly. In Louisiana and Mississippi they may be referred to as "wolves" in some cases. It does not seem to have too much effect on the rabbit. The rabbit may be eaten, however, I would cut out the affected area first.—CHARLES SHAW



Dear Editor: Newellton

I am 11 years old. Here is a picture of squirrels I killed on the second day of squirrel season. I killed them on Bruin Hunting Club.

Please use this picture in one of your magazines.

BUZZ BRADLEY



WHEN THE MOUSE IS AWAY—While on his way to work recently C. M. Newsom, left, of Urania spotted this bobcat and fired away. The event took place in Caldwell Parish on the Sikes-Olla highway early in the morning. Helping Newsom display the healthy specimen is Albert Willis of Jena.

Oyster Production!

LYLE S. ST. AMANT

WE'RE NUMBER ONE. Yes Louisiana is first in the nation but we are not talking about football. In this case it's oysters!

Yes, the fact that Louisiana produced 20 percent of all the oysters in the United States in 1963 places us in the number one position, but can hold our top position as a producer of this famous seafood or shall we, like many a gridiron giant, fall from the top spot in future years? An analysis of production records indicates that Louisiana has always been a great oyster producer and for a long time has ranked near the top having placed no lower than fourth since 1959. Our present top position is due in part to expansion and increased production by the Louisiana industry and in part because of a decline in production in other areas.

The top oyster producing states in the United

States are Louisiana, Virginia, Maryland and Washington. And these four areas from year to year produce between 65% and 80% of the total United States catch. Production in these states far exceeds other areas because all have large and excellent oyster growing areas and because the oyster grounds are carefully managed by state agencies and private oyster farmers. Because of its extensive and excellent oyster areas, it is unlikely that Louisiana will fall from one of the top four places but its climb to the number one position has been slow and it will take careful management and work to maintain this position.

OYSTER PRODUCTION

Oyster harvest figures from Louisiana alone show little upon which to base trends in production unless this area is compared to other areas. Tables I and II show the oyster landing in mil-



Louisiana owns and manages 450,000 acres of natural oyster seed grounds. One principle for sound management is the planting of shells on these grounds. Prior to the actual planting, the shells are measured to determine quality and size.



Author Lyle S. St. Amant, chief of the commission's oysters, water bottoms and seafood division, inspects a chart prior to a shell planting operation.

hundreds of pounds of meat from major areas for the period 1959-63.

I. Oyster Landings by Regions, 1959-1963** (Thousands of pounds of meats)

	1959	1960	1961	1962	*1963
New England	387	500	453	294	300
Middle Atlantic ..	1,392	1,154	1,921	2,362	780
Chesapeake	33,322	27,111	27,500	19,939	17,992
South Atlantic ...	3,516	4,119	3,984	3,850	4,832
Gulf	13,721	16,098	18,240	18,838	24,137
Pacific	12,372	11,028	10,207	10,754	8,989
Total	64,710	60,010	62,305	56,037	57,030

*Preliminary, subject to revision

**From U. S. Fish and Wild Life Service data.

II. Oyster Landings—Gulf and other major production states

(Thousands of pounds of meats)

	1959	1960	1961	1962	*1963
Florida, West Coast	1,415	1,931	3,255	4,952	4,826
Alabama	895	1,169	509	443	995
Mississippi	886	2,391	3,241	2,073	4,679
Louisiana	9,114	8,311	10,139	10,160	11,563
Texas	1,411	2,296	1,096	1,210	2,614
Maryland	11,966	11,771	10,337	8,139	7,477
Virginia	21,356	15,340	17,163	11,800	10,517
Washington	10,099	9,251	8,658	8,903	7,361

*Preliminary, subject to revision

An analysis of the above data indicates a number of interesting facts about oyster production.

First, it should be noted that total production in the United States is down by 11 percent during the five year period from 1959. While 11 percent may not appear to be too serious a loss, decreased production in some areas has been staggering and the total production has been saved from catastrophe only because other areas, principally the Gulf States, have increased production to a point that the losses were almost cancelled. For example, Gulf oyster production in 1959 made up only 21 percent of the U. S. production, while by 1963, it had risen to 42 percent of the total. Louisiana's production increased from 15 percent to 20 percent of the U. S. total. Its annual production is up 26 percent and its rank has changed from third or fourth in the U. S. to 1st position.

Other States along the Gulf, though producing fewer oysters than Louisiana, have shown much greater increases in production. Texas is up by 85 percent, Mississippi 96 percent, and Florida 200 percent, which is reflected in a total increase in Gulf oyster production of 79 percent during the past five years.

While the Gulf area has shown considerable advance since 1959, other areas have not fared so well. Our neighboring States on the East Coast have suffered some staggering losses with the Chesapeake and Middle Atlantic Area showing a 46 percent decline in production. To the West, on the Pacific Coast, production is down by 28 percent. Only the South Atlantic Area showed an increase in production of 37 percent.

It is evident from the above data that Louisiana holds a strong position in production of oysters in the United States but it is also clear that our present position at the top of the list is a precarious one. Basically, Louisiana is blessed with a large oyster growing area having for the most part optimum characteristics for oyster production but problems do exist in the industry and unless these are overcome or controlled it is improbable that we shall remain very long in the number one position.

This being the case let us take a look at the



From September through April the Louisiana oyster grows rapidly reaching four to five inches in length. Here a measuring device is used to determine actual growth.

Louisiana oyster industry, its method of operation, and some of its problems.

OYSTER CULTIVATION

The cultivation of oysters in Louisiana is a well defined and managed industry. It involves the culture of oysters on privately owned or leased water bottoms with State owned areas set aside as a source of seed oysters. In Louisiana, the state owns and manages some 450,000 acres of natural seed grounds where oysters grow wild. In this area seasons are set for the taking of seed oysters depending on annual conditions. Oyster growers are allowed to gather wild seed for planting on their privately leased grounds where they are culled, separated, planted to get maximum food and growth and later harvested. This process is usually an annual operation though in some cases may occur over a two year period.

Louisiana's seed grounds, which are never leased to private individuals, for the most part, lie east of the Mississippi River in low salinity areas where disease and predation are not a problem. The privately leased lands are in more saline areas on each side of the Mississippi River Delta. They consist of 83,000 acres of scattered leases ranging from a few acres to several hundred acres in size, and located from the Mississippi line to Western Vermilion Bay.

Leases are surveyed, mapped and recorded by the Louisiana Wild Life and Fisheries Commission with official recordation in parish seats. Lease holders pay the State one dollar per acre annually for such leases and some large operators may have 1,500 to 2,000 acres under lease.

Since oysters grow very rapidly in warm southern waters, oyster production is an annual crop and the average age of the oyster when marketed is 18 to 30 months. In general the seed oysters are selected and planted in September, October and November when they reach an age of 12 to 16 months and a size of $2\frac{1}{2}$ to 3". From September to March they grow rapidly reaching 4 to 5" in length, fatten and become more salty. Harvesting for cannery production starts in January and continues through May 20th. Sack or raw shop oysters may be sold to stores and restaurants the year round.

Although the above system of cultivation is typical and the way most of the oyster crop is handled exceptions do occur. In some cases, usually in areas of low salinity, leases may involve bottoms which grow oysters naturally. In such areas cultivation and harvesting may be almost a continuous process. The local growing wild oysters are picked up, culled, separated and replanted on adjacent bottoms and some part of the lease may always have oysters suitable for harvesting while other parts may contain oysters in different stages of cultivation. In yet other instances oysters may be allowed to grow through two seasons in order to produce large high quality oysters. Such an operation must be in areas low in snail predation and disease and usually are located in waters with less than 14 parts per thousand of salt.



This large cluster contains too many oysters. If separated the individual oyster would grow larger and take a better shape.

Harvested oysters, of course, vary in quality and size and are marketed in three ways, i.e. (1) canned or processed; (2) raw-shop or shucked and packed in iced containers; and (3) counter or restaurant supply sold in the shell. Shucked or counter oysters are known in the trade as "sack-oysters", are usually of the best quality and are generally marketed by the sack. The market value of oysters ranges from \$2.50 to \$5.00 per sack, depending on quality.

THE OYSTER INDUSTRY

The growing of oysters is a big business but like most industries it is not without its problems. Oysters like all living things are subject to disease, predation and death from natural causes. In addition to such expected problems in any animal population the oyster industry is also faced with a vast expansion of industrial operations into oyster growing areas. This leads to the possibility of chemical and bacterial pollution of oysters, the loss of oysters from dredging, silting, current changes, and salinity changes and to an actual physical loss of oyster growing areas to growing industries. With such multiple problems it requires constant vigilance on the part of the State and private oyster growers to maintain maximum production. Curiously enough the very nature of the oyster itself leads to many of the problems that the industry must face. For example:

- (1) By nature oysters are sessile animals, unable to move. They remain attached to the substrata for life once the larvae set, unless moved by man. This means that oysters cannot remove themselves from predators or areas of environmental disturbances like fish

or shrimp and as a result may be eaten by predators, polluted, silted over or damaged in direct proportion to the nearness of the disturbance.

(2) The immobile characteristic of the oyster necessitates that its food must come to it. Oysters feed by circulating 50 to 100 gallons of water over the mouth daily to filter out the planktonic food organisms. Obviously oyster beds containing hundreds of thousands of oysters require a large volume of fertile water to meet food requirements. Such water volumes occur only in areas with good currents and large water movements, limiting the areas where quality oysters can grow successfully. This accounts for the way in which improper spoil deposition and changes in currents or water flow can damage oyster areas though industrial activity may be some distance from the beds.

(3) The filtering of nearly 100 gallons of water daily brings other factors into play. Traces of pollution will be multiplied by the oysters' filtering system resulting in much higher concentrations of bacteria, or chemicals occurring in oyster meats than in surrounding waters. As little as one or two parts per million of oil in water will be concentrated in the oyster to a point that it is made inedible. Oyster beds contaminated with oily mud may result in oily tasting oysters in as little as 48 hours.

(4) The filtering of water by oysters also serves to supply oxygen to the gills. Excessive silting will cover the oyster to the extent that it cannot pump resulting in death. Recent research indicates that abnormal amounts of turbidity or silt in water reduces the amount of water pumped by oysters which in turn reduces the food intake.

(5) Oysters can live in a wide range of salinities extending from 5 to 25 or 30 parts per thousand of salt. This factor alone accounts for the ability of the oyster to survive



The oyster industry has become a mechanized one. Oysters are shoveled to a conveyor for processing at the industrial plant.

under adverse conditions. In Louisiana, however, areas having salinities above 15 parts per thousand will not support a continuous growth of oysters because predation from snails or loss from disease disrupts the life cycle. In such areas, however, oyster growth is rapid and a high quality oyster is produced in the winter months. Most of the private leases are in the high saline areas since the grower can plant in the fall months and harvest in spring before predation or disease can become effective. Seed oysters and young spat are generally able to survive in areas below 15 parts per thousand of salt when predation and disease is not a factor. It is in such areas that natural seed grounds may be developed. Obviously should canaling or water flow change increase salinities above 15 parts per thousand in a seed area that natural seed area will be destroyed or conversely should freshwater channeled into an area reduce salinities below 5 parts per thousand serious mortalities could occur.

CONCLUSION

In concluding it must be recognized that Louisiana holds the number one position in oyster production for several reasons. First, because we have been blessed with large acreages of excellent oyster areas. Second, the Louisiana oysterman is a diligent worker who is interested in preserving and expanding his industry. And third because Louisiana through its Wild Life and Fisheries Commission makes an earnest effort to manage and protect the industry in order to maintain maximum production. *



The oyster dredge is the oyster fisherman's plow and expedites the harvest of cultivated oysters. Some luggers operate as many as four of these dredges.

King Mackerel Record Broken

ON NOVEMBER 18, as this issue of the LOUISIANA CONSERVATIONIST was being readied for the printer, another Louisiana fish record tumbled. George E. Marcuse of New Orleans, fishing in East Bay reached out of Venice, broke the standing record of 51 pounds for king mackerel. The four-year record was broken by a king that tipped the scales at at even 55 pounds. It was part of the huge mackerel catch made by Marcuse and members of his party that day.

Records of Louisiana's biggest fish are kept by the Louisiana Outdoor Writers Association. Dan Hardesty, executive sports editor of the Baton Rouge State-Times, is chairman of the LOWA Fish Records Committee and has issued an appeal to anglers to report their catches, making application for positions of honor on the list. Every effort is being made to complete and enlarge the list. Persons possessing evidence of catching fish which belong on this state list are urged to write to Dan Hardesty, in care of the Baton Rouge State-Times.

Following is the current list of "big ones," and if you can beat any of them, or add to the list here they are:

LOUISIANA FISH RECORDS

Compiled by

LOUISIANA OUTDOOR WRITERS ASSOCIATION

FRESH WATER RECORDS

BASS, LARGEMOUTH

- 11-11, Elwin Huser, Nov. 1958
- 11- 6, Zeke Davis, March 1962
- 11- 2, Robert Berry, March 1959
- 10- 6, Rufus Williams, Aug. 1956
- 10- 4, Nat Smith, 1958
- 10- 1, J. E. Stewart, 1957
- 10- 0, George Berger, Jan. 1960
- 10- 0, George Wilson, March 1950
- 9-14, Henry H. Harris, March 1964

BASS, SPOTTED (Kentucky)

- 4- 3, Carroll Perkins
- 1-13, J. W. McFatter, April 1964

BREAM

- 2- 8, Grant M. Kelly, 1959
- 2- 1, Dee Murphy, April 1957
- 1-14, Fernin Grigsby, 1947
- 1-11, Fred W. Elliott, April 1962
- 1- 9, W. E. Morley, July 1953
- 1- 8, Bob Searce, Feb. 1954



Bob Dennie

George E. Marcuse, New Orleans, is shown holding the new record king mackerel for Louisiana. His king was taken November 18 and weighed an even 55 pounds. Its length was 59½ inches and the fish had a girth of 31 inches. It was taken in East Bay out of Venice aboard the charterboat Pompano, skippered by Capt. Buddy Pons. The big king mackerel hit a menhaden (poggy) and was landed on spinning tackle fitted with 30-pound test line. Marcuse was fishing with Hal Hassey, operator of El Tarpon Tropical Fishing Lodge, Carmen, Compeche, Mexico. Ironically, Marcuse's king mackerel took top honors over Capt. Buddy Pons' 51 pounder which was taken in 1960 and stood as state record for four years.

CRAPPIE (sacalait)

- 4- 4, Welzie Garrett, April 1950
- 3-14, Pat Cullen, March 1960
- 3-13½, Nellie Keller, Feb. 1964
- 2-14, Leander Frey, April 1953
- 2-12, Mabel Slaton, April 1964

SALT WATER RECORDS

AMBERJACK

- 83- 0, George Tucker, July 1959
- 63- 0, Don Lyman, July 1958
- 62- 0, Mrs. Edwin Loe, July 1958
- 54- 8, Bill Barnhill, Aug. 1963
- 53- 4, Albert Steen, July 1963

BARRACUDA

- 36-12, C. F. Carter, Jr., July 1959
- 36- 8, Frank Heard, July 1958

POMPANO

- 5- 9, Bill Duffy, Jan. 1964
- 5- 9, H. H. McCain, Dec. 1953
- 5- 8, Tony Sebastian, Jan. 1955

REDFISH

- 56- 8, O. L. Comish, Sept. 1963
- 45-12, Joseph Vetrano, Oct. 1957
- 43- 0, Sylvia Theriot, July 1959
- 42- 0, John Fischtzier, July 1959

BLUEFISH

- 6- 0, Leonard J. Dazet, Aug. 1961
- 5- 8, T. L. Gornly, 1961
- 4- 7, B. W. Blackmon, Jr., July 1960

BONITO

- 24- 9, Stirling Couch, July 1949
20- 0, Mrs. Lester Plaisance, July 1959

COBIA

- 73- 0, Jack Dart, May 1954
68- 0, Robert G. Hebert, May 1964
65- 0, Miss Pat Morvant, July 1962
64- 4, Watson Merritt, July 1956
58- 8, Jimmy Touns, July 1959
55- 4, James Prejean, July 1960
54- 4, Buddy Pons, July 1959
52- 4, Clyde Martin, July 1957
50- 0, Kelly Stewart, 1963
46-12, George W. Hardee, Jr., July 1963

DOLPHIN

- 50- 0, Harley B. Howcott, May 1962
47- 8, Bob Breazeale, July 1960
44- 0, Frank Dennison, Aug. 1959
40- 0, David Summersgill, July 1962
39- 8, William J. Scheffler, July 1959
38- 8, William J. Scheffler, July 1958
38- 0, Charles McVey, June 1957
38- 0, John Lauricella, 1961
33- 0, E. F. Stacy, Jr., July 1953

FLOUNDER

- 8-10, Paulton Hebert, Oct. 1958
8- 8, Gerald Fatzer, Oct. 1952
7- 8, George Baddle

JACK CREVALLE

- 40- 0, Edwin F. Stacy, Jr., July 1953
34- 0, L. E. Hawsey, July 1951
32- 8, H. D. Hecht, May 1953
32- 8, S. D. Jastremski, July 1959

REDFISH

- 40- 8, Dale Messina, July 1959
39- 4, Dr. Henry LaRocci, July 1957
36- 4, Dr. Charles Odom, Aug. 1962
34- 0, R. W. Meadows, Aug. 1953
33-12, Edward Romero, Oct. 1953

SHEEPSHEAD

- 11- 8, Mrs. Aubrey Bares, 1955
11- 8, Steve Troesch, Dec. 1956

SAILFISH

- 96- 0, John Lauricella
77- 0, Mrs. Camille Cazadessus, Sept. 1955
70- 4, Harry Smith, July 1959
63- 8, C. W. Austin, July 1964
62- 0, Mrs. Edwin Loe, Oct. 1959

SNAPPER

- 74- 0, Jim Meriwether, Oct. 1963

SPADEFISH

- 8- 3, Charles Sebastian, Aug. 1963
6- 2, Lawrence Chouest, July 1961
6- 0, Richard Glynn, July 1962
5-10, Henry Cook, July 1959

SPEARFISH

- 78- 0, Larry Bulot, July 11, 1964

TARPON

- 198- 8, Oswald Frey, Sept. 1951
183- 0, Mark Brown, July 1935
161- 0, Ned McGehee, July 1953
156- 8, Robert Phillips, July 1954
155- 4, Mrs. E. M. Egle, Aug. 1962

- 154- 4, Mrs. Richard Carrere, July 1950
153- 4, Stanley Tinney, July 1951
145- 4, Lester Plaisance, Aug. 1964
144- 8, John Fischtzier, July 1954
144- 8, John Lauricella, July 1959
140- 4, Robert L. Waterbury, Aug. 1948
140- 0, Augustus Elmer III, June 1954

MARLIN, BLUE

- 463- 8, Jim Meriwether, July 1958
419-12, Doug Manship, June 1963
378- 8, Jack Brown, July 1962
370- 0, Harold L. Rosbottom, May 1962
363- 0, E. H. Wagner, Aug. 1963
354- 0, Joe Ramm, July 1961
308- 8, Robert Flanagan, Jr., July 1959
282- 0, Jim Corbett, June 1961
275- 0, Mrs. George T. Schneider, Oct. 1959
263- 0, W. J. Huges, Jr., June 1959

MARLIN, WHITE

- 95- 8, Mrs. Mary Smith, May 1964
92- 0, Clyde Hawk, July 1959
90- 0, Charles Schwing, July 1958
83- 8, J. B. Prager III, 1959
80- 0, Mrs. Edwin Loe, Aug. 1962

MACKEREL, KING

- 55- 0, George E. Marcuse, Nov. 18, 1964
51- 0, Buddy Pons, July 1960
50- 8, Frank Petit, July 1960
48- 4, Larry Johnson, Aug. 1963

MACKEREL, SPANISH

- 6- 8, Al Hoeke, Oct. 1959
6- 0, E. W. Montgomery, 1954
5-12, Harold Staples, Jr., July 1963
5-10, Manuel Duveau, Aug. 1963
5- 6, Joe Temento, July 1962

TRIPLETAIL

- 39- 8, Mrs. Jimmy Touns, July 1959
33-12, L. J. Pitre, 1959
33- 0, Bob Moran, June 1953

TROUT, SPECKLED

- 12- 6, Leon Mattes, May 1950
9- 2, Jack Burniston, Aug. 1956
8-10, T. E. Fortson, July 1957
8- 2, Mrs. A. J. Hughes, Nov. 1956
8- 0, Lloyd J. Amedee, June 1954
7-10, Gibson Collins, July 1957
7- 9, M. J. Farac, July 1961
7- 8, Mrs. Paul Delery, April 1955
7- 4, Charles Anderson, April 1954

TUNA, BLUEFIN

- 440- 0, Jim Meriwether, May 1963

TUNA, BLACKFIN

- 15- 0, Robert Levert, Jr., Aug. 1963

TUNA, YELLOWFIN (Allison)

- 160- 0, Charles Duchein, Oct. 1960
155- 0, Kingsley Bodman, June 1957
155- 0, Dr. F. N. Vallette, Aug. 1963
144- 8, Doug Manship, July 1964

WAHOO

- 76-12, Ed Hamilton, July 1963
70- 3, Harley B. Howcott, Jr., July 1963
70- 0, Clyde Sharp, May 1960
64-12, W. C. Sheppergill, July 1963
60-12, Nick C. Bouzon, 1958

GEORGIA PACIFIC

Wildlife Management Area

CLIFF WILLIAMS

ANOTHER WILDLIFE management area in northeastern Louisiana came into being on October 1, 1964 when a lease was renewed on the former Terzia Refuge in Morehouse Parish. Located east of the Ouachita River and about 5 miles northwest of Bastrop, Louisiana, the Georgia Pacific Wildlife Management Area is comprised of a variety of habitat types. The western portion is relatively flat and contains mixed bottomland hardwood tree species while the terrain of the eastern section varies from gently rolling to flat pine, hardwood and pine-hardwood areas. Scattered throughout its expanse are numerous improved woods roads, pipe lines, bayous and several small lakes.

Primarily, the tree species consist of water oak, willow oak, overcup oak, bitter pecan, elm, sweetgum, pine, blackgum, red oak, white oak, post oak and a scattering of hickory, cypress, willow and tupelo gum. The understory composition is mainly deciduous holly, rough leafed dogwood, snowbell, swamp privet, buttonbush, pepper vine, greenbriar, blackberry, trumpet creeper, grape, French mulberry, rattan and dewberry.

Since this is the Commission's newest wildlife management area, complete management plans

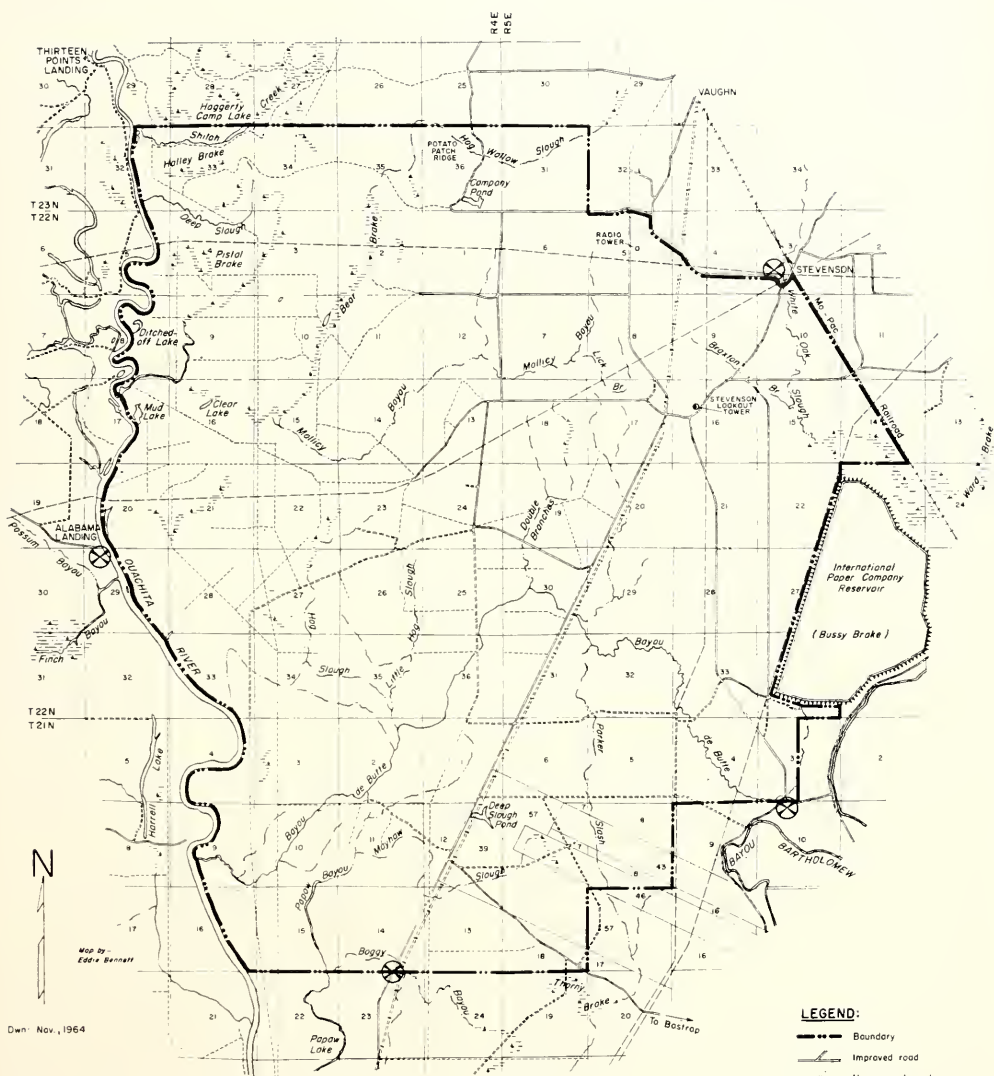
have not been completed. Those outlined at present are managed hunts for deer and a continuation of the wild turkey trapping program. The turkey trapping and habitat improvement programs will be expanded in the near future and controlled hunts for small game will be permitted. Many bottomland sections of the wildlife management area show good promise for development as green-tree waterfowl impoundments.

Owned chiefly by the Georgia Pacific Paper Corporation, this 42,000 acre tract of timberland was the last refuge under the control of the Commission to be converted to a wildlife management area.

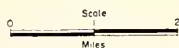
Years of research in the field of wildlife management has proved the fact that game species should be hunted to some degree in order to maintain the population in a healthy and balanced condition. In some instances the population must be reduced greatly, as in the case with our big game animals. Many animals are born, live and die within a refuge or preserve and are not available to the hunting public because the average daily and seasonal game range is usually of comparatively small size. This does not mean that a

Joe Herring





GEORGIA-PACIFIC WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AREA



LEGEND:

- Boundary
- Improved road
- - - - - Unimproved road
- ~ ~ ~ ~ ~ Streams
- . - . - Intermittent streams
- - - - - Trail
- . - . - Marsh
- - - - - Railroad
- - - - - Pipe line
- - - - - Power line
- - - - - Levee
- ⊗ Check station

refuge is not a tool of game management because it is under certain situations. But once a game population has been established, the value of a refuge fades and the game involved can be legally hunted without any ill effects to it.

Originally, Terzia was established in the 1920's and was one of the oldest refuges in the State of Louisiana. It supports a good deer herd and has one of the highest wild turkey populations found anywhere in the state. In years gone by, the hunting public has reaped benefits from the fringe areas around the Georgia Pacific tract and the aesthetic value to the general public has been great. But, the main resources within the area have not been tapped.

The plans and programs being outlined for the Georgia Pacific Wildlife Management Area by the Louisiana Wild Life and Fisheries Commission are very similar to those for other game management areas located throughout the State. As in the past, it is the Commission's intent to manage Louisiana wildlife resources wisely and to provide the maximum amount of usage by the general public.

The conversion of this refuge to a game management will not be a detriment to existing wildlife but will be an asset to the northeastern part of the state. In fact, managed hunts will furnish additional hunting opportunities for Louisiana sportsmen as well as being of economic importance to Morehouse and adjoining parishes. *



Joe Herring

Jerry Farrar, Fish and Game Division district biologist, replaces an entrance marker on the newly acquired wildlife management area which is leased and managed by the Louisiana Wild Life and Fisheries Commission. Entrances such as this will serve as access points for Louisiana sportsmen during the controlled game management area hunts.



Joe Herring

Opelousas District Office Completed

A NEW WILD LIFE and Fisheries Commission facility in Opelousas will be completed by January 1. The new structure is the District VI office building located on two acres of property three miles south of Opelousas on the Opelousas-Sunset Highway — old highway 167.

The new district office will house a staff of three game biologists, one fisheries biologist, enforcement personnel, one wildlife instructor, and a secretary.

The area served by the district includes the parishes of Avoyelles, Pointe Coupee, St. Landry, Lafayette, St. Martin, West Baton Rouge, Iberville and that portion of Ascension Parish which lies west of the Mississippi River.

The new building, constructed of masonry and glass, has approximately 1600 square feet of working space which includes six individual offices, two rest rooms, conference room and a waiting room. The building will also be equipped with a two-way radio system which will be capable of communicating with mobile units in the district and other district towers in the state. In the rear of the office a storage building is located in which boats, motors and vehicles can be parked or stored. Ample parking area is also provided at the new site for visitors as well as employees.

At the present time the district office serves as a hub for research on mourning doves, squirrels, rabbits, fisheries management, information and education programs and enforcement of state game and fish laws within the district. Working directly out of the office is fish and game, education and publicity and enforcement division personnel.

An invitation is extended to all citizens to visit this new facility when completed. Sportsmen of the district are urged to contact the office with questions or wildlife problems. *



Bob Dennie

Pilot, biologist and waste control inspector easily spot a blown out well and oil slick along Louisiana's coast. This location is pinpointed on map and affected area immediately reported to operating company. In this way the time in which corrective measures can be taken is speeded up.

Planes Versus Pollution

THOMAS GILBERT

LOUISIANA'S 3,813 offshore and 25,304 inland oil wells, including those wells located in four million acres of marshland, can be inspected on a monthly basis through the use of airplanes.

In order to meet the challenge brought about by pollution and pollution hazards, resulting from drilling production and transportation of oil, the Louisiana Wild Life and Fisheries Commission, through its water pollution control division, coastal waste control section and the aviation section, has initiated a program of systematic aerial surveys. And cooperation of oil companies operating in the state has been exceptionally good.

Although the use of the airplanes is not a new

tool in pollution abatement practices, their previous employment was generally confined to specific pollution complaints on a localized basis. The first of a series of systematic aerial surveys began on October 3, 1964, and have continued on a weekly basis since that time. These surveys were conducted, for the most part, over the offshore and marshland oil fields from Breton Sound on the east to West Cote Blanche Bay on the west. The pollution abatement resulting from these flights was very gratifying before the advent of Hurricane Hilda. The twisting, churning wind and wave action caused by Hilda played havoc with offshore and marshland oil field facilities, with a resulting increase in pollution. These problems are diminishing rapidly, but by no

means are they completely solved at the present time.

Crude oil and the lighter hydrocarbon discharges from oil production operations are easily detected by an aerial observer. The black and brownish ribbons of crude oil on water can readily be traced to their point of origin, as can be rainbow colored films of lighter hydrocarbons. Silt laden waste from gravel mining operations can also be quickly defined and traced back to the source. Oil and brine discharges from inland oil field operations also exhibit, to the experienced observer, telltale trails leading to their origin. The most striking indicator of surface brine discharge in inland oil fields is the trail of dead trees, shrubs, and grasses which serve notice that oil field brines are, or have been, present.

It should be noted here that aerial observation and inspection of oil producing areas should not be considered as a means to an end in itself, but rather as an integrated part of a pollution abatement team operating on the ground and water as well. The aerial observer notes the type of violation and pinpoints the location on a chart; this information is then turned over to the appropriate coastal or inland waste control inspectors for immediate action. The obvious benefit derived from this type of integrated inspection is that an extensive area can be covered by plane in a short period of time, and only those specific points where violations have been noted need be visited by boat or car. This constitutes the saving of many man hour and many miles of travel. Quite often a telephone call to the appropriate representative of the company responsible for the violation is all that is needed to bring about corrective action. Locations where past violations have been noted are double checked on subsequent flights.

In order to better coordinate the efforts of the aerial observer and coastal waste control inspectors identical charts are used by each. These charts are modified so that a location can be reasonably pinpointed in one quick glance with a



Bob Dennie

Jack Hood, left, coastal waste control inspector and Tom Gilbert, water pollution control division biologist, check chart for identification of oil company operating in the affected location. A telephone call is then made to representatives of the company.

minimum use of landmarks, and has been very helpful in offshore areas. The charts are traversed with horizontal and vertical lines so that the resulting squares formed encompass an area of approximately three square miles—each vertical line of squares is numerically designated, and each horizontal line of squares is alphabetically designated. This system allows the observer to pinpoint the location of a violation within a three square mile area; a more definitive location can sometimes be given within the square itself.

The increasing complexity of the pollution problems present today, and the time and man power consumed in the solving of these problems requires that the best use be made of available time. The utilization of aircraft as an additional integral tool of pollution abatement efforts is such a use. *



Personnel of the water pollution control division and the aviation section team up to spot pollutants in coastal areas.

The Bird of the month

Charles R. Shaw

THE NAME OF THIS bird is descriptive since the large, black bordered, white crest on the black head of the male is its most distinctive mark. The neck and upper parts are also black on the drake, but there is some brownish coloration on the sides. The female has a dark neck and head topped by a reddish-brown crest which distinguishes it from the females of the other two species of mergansers which occur in Louisiana during the winter; namely, the Common Merganser and the Red-breasted Merganser. The immature Hooded Mergansers resemble the female in having a brownish colored crest. The crests may be raised or lowered at will.

The "bec-scie" or "saw-bill" is not considered to be much of a prize by duck hunters, who may also call it "fish-duck" in derogatory tones. This low regard does not seem to be held by the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service as far as the Hooded Merganser is concerned since we were only allowed one per day or two in possession during the 1964 season.

The Hooded Merganser is one of the few species of ducks which is known to breed regularly in Louisiana although it is not too common during the summer. I have only seen one brood which, oddly enough, was hatched out and raised alongside of a busy highway. The nesting habits of this duck are about the same as those of the Wood Duck in that it utilizes holes in trees over or near water. The large clutch of roundish white eggs may number up to a dozen or more. As with the Wood Duck, nesting boxes may be utilized when there is a shortage of natural cavities available. Occasionally a hollow log or stump may be used if nothing better offers.

The ducklings have numerous enemies, of course, including snapping turtles, gar fish, bullfrogs, etc., in addition to the more common predators. A large brood or litter seems to be one

THE HOODED MERGANSER

(*Lophodytes cucullatus*)



of nature's most effective methods for compensating for the many hazards which beset the young of certain species of wildlife.

There is considerable justification in applying the common name of "fish ducks" to the mergansers since they do feed largely on fish and, of course, are admirably adapted for this since their long slender bills are edged by rows of "teeth" which are actually serrations which enable them to grip their slippery prey tightly without it squirting out of the beak as might be the case if it were smooth. They are very skillful at diving and swimming and are quite competent to pursue and catch their agile quarry under water. In addition to fish, the Hooded Merganser may eat tadpoles and small frogs, crawfish, aquatic insects and larvae, snails, etc., and, in addition, is known to take a small amount of vegetable food occasionally.

Considered on appearance alone, the Hooded Merganser is a rather beautiful and striking addition to the avifauna of the state and although not of top rank, and a hunter's trophy, it is still one of the species of waterfowl which may be included in the day's bag, and frequently is. *

RETURN REQUESTED
Louisiana Wild Life and Fisheries Commission
400 Royal Street
New Orleans, Louisiana 70130

STATE OFFERS THE FINEST WINTER FISHING TO BE FOUND ANYWHERE IN THE COUNTRY

Snapper Catch

Of the dozen-odd species of fish which can be taken in the Gulf of Mexico during the winter months, red snappers are probably the most sought-after. With gourmets, the delicately flavored pompano rates highest; but red snappers such as these are the most popular fish. It doesn't take a lot of skill in catching red snappers. It's merely a question of going after them and finding a productive petroleum rig or platform. These fine fish are attracted to the rigs, offering tops in winter sport.

